



FROM BOO-TIFUL TO BOUNTIFUL, FALL AND WINTER HOLIDAYS ARE HAPPIER WITH SAFETY IN MIND

V Corps Safety Office release

The late months of the year are filled with holidays – frightful Halloween, “feastful” Thanksgiving and fanciful Christmas.

But they’re filled with other, potentially dangerous things as well – darkness, cold and plenty of potential for accidents. But an ounce of holiday prevention can fill a bag, a cornucopia and a stocking of holiday cheer. Here are some ways to help keep the season safe.

HALLOWEEN: KEEPING THE TRICKS OUT OF YOUR HOLIDAY TREAT

Halloween safety is a before, during and after process. Here are some tips to keep your haunting holiday safe from one end to the other:

Before leaving home

Make sure costumes and accessories are safe.

- Knives, swords and other accessories should be made from flexible material
- Do not let children carry sharp objects
- Costumes and treat bags should be light-colored and trimmed with reflective tape

- Treat bags should be small enough to handle easily
- Give trick-or-treaters a battery-powered lantern or flashlight to carry
- To avoid accidents, make sure shoes fit properly and costumes don't create a tripping hazard
- Costume and wig materials should be fire retardant
- If the weather is cold, add warm clothes underneath the costume
- Ensure that masks do not obstruct the trick-or-treater's vision
- Face make-up is safer than masks. When using make-up, be sure it is labeled as safe and non-toxic, and follow the manufacturer's instructions

Give your trick-or-treater some rules to follow.

- If you don't go with your children, make sure they wear a watch and have a specific time to return home
- Ensure your children have a way to phone home if necessary
- Tell trick-or-treaters not to eat any candy until they bring it home and you inspect it
- Talk about the routes your children will take, and tell them to stay in familiar areas on established routes
- Discuss traffic safety rules
- Know your children's trick-or-treating companions

Some other pre-haunting precautions:

- Pin a slip of paper with the child's name, address and phone number inside a pocket for emergencies
- Feed children an early meal before they go out. They'll feel better, stay warmer, and be less tempted to eat their treats.

During trick-or-treating

- Be sure an adult or responsible youth is supervising the trick-or-treating

- Stay with a group
- If approached by a stranger, go to a familiar adult or to the nearest well-lit house and find an adult
- Walk on sidewalks and use caution when crossing streets
- Don't run from house to house
- Do not cross dark yards and lawns where unseen objects or uneven terrain can present tripping hazards
- Stop only at well-lit houses, and be sure children know to never enter a stranger's home without a responsible adult
- If you drive, beware of children walking on roadways, medians and curbs or darting out from between parked cars. Enter and exit driveways and alleys carefully

After trick-or-treating

- If your community has a candy inspection or x-ray program, use it before allowing your children to eat their goodies
- Wash fruit thoroughly and slice it into small pieces
- When in doubt -- throw it out!

THANKSGIVING: DON'T LET YOUR HOLIDAY BE A TURKEY

Ah, Thanksgiving. Full of fun, family and food, food, FOOD! But it's the feast that can be the beast if food is handled improperly on Turkey Day. To make sure you cook your turkey -- and not your goose -- here are some tips:

- Defrost your turkey in the refrigerator, never at room temperature
- Stuff the turkey just before cooking to prevent the stuffing from spoiling
- Use a meat thermometer to ensure your turkey is cooked completely

- Keep your hands and all food, utensils and surfaces used in preparing your feast clean
- Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold
- Refrigerate leftovers as soon as possible after your meal
- Keep appliances clean to avoid grease fires
- Never leave cooking unattended
- Keep flammable items away from the stove
- Never wear loose-fitting sleeves around stove burners
- Make sure pot handles aren't protruding from the stove in a way that anyone who passes can tip them over
- Heat oils slowly and have a lid ready for flash fires
- Don't open the door on a microwave fire
- Have a fire extinguisher nearby while cooking
- Don't overload your kitchen's electrical circuits

CHRISTMAS: DECK THE HALLS, BUT DO IT SAFELY

Christmas is most everyone's favorite holiday. It's filled with so many of our favorite things – fellowship, friends, food, and let's face it – presents! But with ice and decorations and partying and oh, Christmas tree, this is one holiday which, unfortunately, is ripe for accidents. Here's a look at how to keep those Christmas bells safely jingling.

Don't go out on a limb with your tree:

- If you select an artificial tree, choose a model that is fire retardant/fire resistant

- If the tree has a built-in electrical system, check to see that it has been tested by an independent laboratory for safety
- If you select a live tree, it should be deep green in color and have a strong scent of pine
- Make sure the needles are attached firmly and can be bent without breaking. This ensures a recently cut tree that is fresh and not dried out. If the needles fall off easily, the tree is already too dry.
- When setting the tree up for display, cut about 2 inches off of the trunk at a diagonal and mount it in a sturdy stand that will hold water
- Keep the tree supplied with enough water to keep it from drying out
- Never set your tree where it will block exits or stand close to heating sources such as registers, radiators or fireplaces
- Remove the tree from your home when it has dried out. Discard or recycle it -- don't burn it

When buying toys, safety is no game:

- Select toys suitable to your child's age, skills and interests
- Avoid toys with small parts that could pose a choking hazard
- Don't buy electric toys with heating elements for small children
- Read the label and use the age guidelines for the toy
- Choose sturdily constructed toys that won't break and pose a cutting or choking hazard
- Immediately discard plastic wrappings that could suffocate a child

Shop hard, shop safe:

- Avoid carrying large packages that block your vision and make you a target for muggers or purse snatchers
- If necessary, ask the store management if an employee can escort you to your car
- Shop during daylight hours whenever possible
- Always park in well-lit areas
- Don't flash large amounts of cash
- Carry wallets in a front pocket and purses either close to your body or under a coat
- Have your keys in your hand before heading to your car, and stay alert to your surroundings
- If you take children shopping with you, keep them in sight at all times. Have a special meeting place in case you get separated
- Don't try to lift too much. Get help with heavy or awkward packages
- Dress comfortably and wear low-heeled comfortable shoes
- Ensure your packages are properly secured in your car when going from store to store. If you can't use the car's trunk cover packages with a blanket or coat
- Check inside your car before getting in
- Gifts for senior citizens should be easy to open, easy to close and not too heavy

Decorate with care:

- Inspect all decorations before placing them on your Christmas tree
- Make sure all decorations are fire retardant or fire resistant
- Use only lighting sets which indicate they have been tested by Underwriters Laboratory (UL)
- Use no more than three light sets per extension cord
- Don't string more than 200 midget or 50 larger bulbs through one string
- Keep cords and plugs away from the water under the tree
- Keep cords out of walkways to prevent tripping
- Don't run cords under carpets or rugs
- Don't let cords get pinched behind furniture
- Position lights so they are not in contact with needles or ornaments
- Avoid using breakable decorations or older decorations that may contain lead-based paint or other toxic materials
- Make sure tinsel is out of children's reach -- it can pose a choking hazard
- Use lights rated for outdoor use outside your home
- Never leave children unattended near candles
- Keep candles away from all flammable materials. Never put lighted candles on your Christmas tree
- Inspect light strings and cords for fraying, bare wire, loose connections and broken sockets

- Ensure items such as tinsel and fragile, glass bulbs are placed high enough on the tree to prevent small children and pets from coming into contact with them

Don't burn up your holiday

- Have chimneys inspected and cleaned regularly
- Always use a fireplace screen or doors
- Don't burn paper or pine boughs that create burning, floating cinders
- Don't use flammable liquids to start fires
- Remove stockings or decorations that could start fires from the fireplace area and mantel
- Have a fire extinguisher nearby
- Make sure coals are completely out before going to bed
- Don't close the chimney flue until the fire is completely out
- Dispose of ashes in a metal container, and never in or near the house

Don't do the "blue Christmas"

The holiday season and an increase in hours of darkness often result in the onset of emotional stress and strain. To avoid the "holiday blues" do the following:

- Set priorities to avoid being trapped by obligations
- Keep a half-hour a day for yourself, just to relax
- Budget your money and your time...and don't blow your budget
- Learn to say "no" and don't overload your work or social calendar
- Eat and drink in moderation and get plenty of rest and exercise
- Plan your gift list early

- Don't try to do it all yourself. Ask for help
- Include some fun activities in your plans for January, when post-holiday blues set in

SAFETY FOR ALL THE HOLIDAYS

Safety is always in season. Here are some things to keep in mind whether you're celebrating in the warmth of spring or dead of winter:

Party smart when you party hearty

- If you are hosting a party, have non-alcoholic beverages available for your non-drinking guests
- Have plenty of food readily available for guests to nibble on, to help mitigate the effects of alcohol
- Ensure you have designated drivers available for guests who have had too much to drink
- If designated drivers are not available, let guests who drink too much spend the night, or call them a cab
- Collect your guests' car keys when they arrive
- Make sure to put out plenty of deep ashtrays for smokers, or have them smoke in a safe place outdoors
- Don't drink more than one drink an hour. One beer, one shot of whiskey and one glass of wine all equal one drink
- Avoid drinking on an empty stomach

- Don't be afraid to say no if you don't want to drink

Don't get unraveled by travel

- If you're driving, be sure to include planned rest stops and activities for children in your itinerary
- Leave a copy of your itinerary with a friend so someone knows where you are
- Don't overload your vehicle or obstruct your view with packages
- Avoid eating a heavy meal before your trip. It could make you sleepy
- Get a good night's sleep before hitting the road
- Be sure to carry emergency supplies in your car, such as a first aid kit, blankets, a flashlight and food
- Allow more time in your plans for increased security at airports
- Have a picture ID handy, but avoid showing your military ID outside the U.S.
- Make sure medications are in carry-on luggage when you fly
- Wear comfortable clothes, but dress for the climate at your destination

